Impact of Interactive Online TESOL Practicum Course on EL Teachers' Professional Growth:
Collaborative Cyclic Guided Online Coaching

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study examined how an online practicum course could enhance teaching for English learners (ELs). Based on research on collaborative and nonjudgmental supervision, a guided online coaching model was adopted with technology-based tools such as Discussion Board, Kaltura, and VoiceThread. Three online coaching cycles were; preconference, observation of teaching videos, and post-conference. Posting frequency and exit-interview transcripts were data sources. There were two research questions: 1) What interactions occurred among online TESOL practicum course participants? and 2) What was the impact of the online TESOL practicum course on participants' EL teaching? The results showed that students interacted more among themselves than with the instructor. Three themes emerged from qualitative data analysis; acknowledgment, impact of cyclic coaching, and linguistically responsive EL-teaching. The results ensured students' active interaction at the virtual communal spaces with some challenges and enhancement of their EL-teaching due to cyclic online coaching.

KEYWORDS

Grounded Theory, Kaltura, Nonjudgmental Coaching, Observation of Teaching Videos, Peer-Coaching, Post-Conference, Pre-Conference, Student-Initiated Discussion, Technology Mediation, VoiceThread

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the online teaching delivery method in higher education is hard to ignore; it can be attributed to a potential student population who cannot attend the physical classes and/or to shrinking university budgets and spaces (Koh & Hill, 2009; Martin, Parker, & Oyazun, 2013; Trentin, 2006; Yohon & Zimmerman, 2006). Teacher education is no exception. The aims of successful online teaching in teacher education programs should be for students to acquire content and pedagogical competencies and to implement both collaboratively and reflectively within the contexts of their classrooms. Another significant element for successful online teaching is the choice of appropriate technology-mediated communication environments (Clark-Ibáñez & Scott, 2008; Kamhi-Stein, 2004).

This study explores how an online TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) practicum course can enhance practicum students' English language teaching.

The first challenge of an online practicum is the selection and incorporation of asynchronous communication environments that will allow students to interact and demonstrate their knowledge of theories and pedagogies regardless of the time of day and/or the location (Bos, Krajcik, & Patric, 1995; Martin, Parker, & Oyarzun, 2013; Wu & Lee, 2004). Another challenge is the development of virtual supervision. There has not been much empirical research validating the success of full online supervision of practicum courses (Song & Simons, 2014). Many online practicums require students to share videotaped teachings and/or streamed videos, to which the instructor provides feedback by email and/or through Discussion Board forums. The Instructor usually provides feedback much later than when the actual teachings take place since he/she must wait to get the teaching videos and lesson plans. Some instructors require online practicum students to return to campus to complete their practicum experiences for onsite teacher-to-student supervision (Miller, Lee, & Chu, 2014).

Based on 'best practices' in teaching English learners (ELs) and online teaching and learning, two research questions (RQs) were proposed: 1) What interactions occurred among online TESOL practicum course participants? and 2) What was the impact of the online TESOL practicum course on participants' EL teaching?

BACKGROUND

This section provides the background of the study with a literature review on benefits and challenges of online teaching and learning, guided online coaching, and linguistically responsive EL-teaching.

Benefits and Challenges of Online Teaching and Learning

When carefully crafted to ensure student engagement and course content learning, online teaching can provide a dynamic learning environment with technology mediation (Song & Simons, 2014; Clark-Ibáñez & Scott, 2008; Kamhi-Stein, 2000). The basic tenet of online teaching is that student learning should come first, mediated by technology. Not unlike face-to-face teaching, virtual collaborative work contains dimensions of mastering tasks or course objectives as well as social relationship development (Carabajal, Lapointe, & Gunawardena, 2003). Another tenet is that learning happens not only through readings or recorded instructor-centered lectures, but also through interaction and active participation within the technology-mediated communication environment (Song & Simons, 2014; Clark-Ibáñez & Scott, 2008; Kamhi-Stein, 2000).

Students in online courses develop critical and reflective thinking skills through reading, questioning, sharing their ideas, and forming a virtual learning community to trigger deeper understanding of academic concepts (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004; Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Kamhi-Stein (2000) reports about a TESOL method course into which the instructor incorporates online discussions on Blackboard: Students at Discussion Board (DB) generate more questions and creative ideas than those in face-to-face classrooms. If developed properly with 'well-composed topics', online teaching can increase students' concentration levels and critical reflection, and shape more active engagement (Hew & Cheung, 2013). Through technology mediation, online teaching can provide endless access to various forms of instructional resources, expertise, and creative assignments (Clark-Ibáñez & Scott, 2008). Since reading and writing make up a large part of an online course (Jones & Johnson-Yale, 2005), taking online courses is another way of enhancing students' literacy. Students, especially nonnative English-speaking students, can also take time to think before they speak and write, and also listen to their peers' and instructor's oral feedback and presentations as many times as needed.

There are, however, challenges to teaching and learning online. First, students need to understand that online classes require in-depth reading and writing in order to demonstrate their understanding of the core concepts. Online instructors need to convey to students what is expected of them explicitly (Song & Simons, 2014). Another significant challenge for online learning is to develop community

sense and connection between faculty and learners, and among learners (Vonderwell, 2003; Wisenberg & Stacey, 2005). The difficulty of communication among online learners due to time zone differences and technology difficulties (Vonderwell, 2003; Wisenberg & Stacey, 2005) creates barriers. Nunn (2002) is concerned about Internet access problems for the students who are taking online TESOL courses outside of the United States. In addition to internet access, the students' lack of certain technology skills can also cause difficulty in having success in online learning. An added challenge is encouraging passive learners to participate in the virtual discussion. This is particularly the case among nonnative English-speaking students who may have difficulty in initiating discussions (Nunn, 2002). In order to solve these challenges, it is critical to allow students to share their complaints and frustrations about online courses. Sharing frustrations is a sign of a healthy online community (Collison et al., 2000). For successful online course outcomes, students also need to have a virtual tutoring opportunity for technology tools, hopefully 'low-end' ones (Nunn, 2002).

Developing and Expanding Guided Online Coaching for Supervision

Supervision is a necessary element for practicum courses. A designated supervisor needs to observe and comment on online practicum students' teaching throughout the semester. Gebhard's (1984) five supervision models and Costa and Garmston's (2002, 2010) cognitive coaching along with the asynchronous and synchronous technologies are adopted to develop guided online coaching in order to supervise TESOL practicum students in this study.

Five supervision models by Gebhard (1984) are directive, alternative, collaborative, non-directive, and creative. In the direct supervision model, a supervisor monitors teachers by observing and providing feedback directly on how to improve teaching. The alternative supervision model proposes that teachers choose the most appropriate strategies with a supervisor (Gebhard,1984). The collaborative supervision model allows the teacher and the supervisor to work together to determine strategies for classroom improvement. In the non-directive supervision model, the supervisor restates the teacher's reflection of her/his teaching process without judgmental opinion. In the creative supervision model, the supervisor provides supervising cases done by consultants, or teachers or experts, and lets the teacher choose the most creative teaching approach to use.

A cognitive coaching model is proposed by Costa and Garmston (2002). Following John Dewey's ideas on reflective actions as the core elements of teachers' professional growth, Costa and Garmston developed a staff development technique now known as cognitive coaching. Depending on the situation and on the needs of an individual teacher, a cognitive coach shifts to collaboration and consultation mentioned in Gebhard's (1984) five supervision models. Cognitive coaching aims to transform teachers professionally "by enhancing one's ability to examine familiar patterns of practice and recognize underlying assumptions that guide and direct action" (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p. 5). A cognitive coach is a trained individual who assists teachers in their planning, delivering, reflecting, and transforming for the next lesson preparation. Cognitive coaches enhance collaborative and reflective teaching by trust-building, pausing, acknowledging, paraphrasing, summarizing, and asking guided questions when they think aloud with the teachers (Costa & Garmston, 2002).

Based on Gebhard's five supervision models, and Costa and Garmston's cognitive coaching, a guided online coaching model is developed as a virtual supervision tool for the TESOL practicum course. The goal of the guided online coaching is not to judge teachers, but to acknowledge and facilitate effective EL-teaching and reflective practices (Song & Simons, 2014; Costa & Garmston, 2010; Gebhard, 1984). Guided coaching, thus, can be understood as an intentional and conscious dialogue between two people, in which exploration, critique, and reflection transform teaching practices (Sherris, Bauder, & Hillyard, 2007). The guided online coaching model has adopted the three steps of cognitive coaching, i.e., preconference, observation, and postconference (Costa & Garmston, 2002) with technology mediation using DB, Kaltura, VT, and Wimba in each of the three cycles; 1) preparing lessons at DB (preconference), 2) delivering the lessons and uploading teaching videos for observing the teaching practices using Kaltura Media and VoiceThread (observation),

and 3) reflecting using the assessment data and providing peer/instructor-reviews at VT, DB, and Wimba Classroom (postconference) (Figure 2). The guided online coaching utilizes asynchronous and synchronous technology-mediated environments to make this virtual supervision more collaborative, reflective, and inquiry-based.

Asynchronous environment is highly flexible, and it can be accessed anytime from anywhere. The instructor and students are separated in time and space, and are, therefore, geographically and temporally independent and diverse (Murphy, Walker, & Webb, 2013). Asynchronous environment allows students to read, write, reflect, and talk about their ideas in their own time (Friend & Johnston, 2005; Petrides, 2002; Vonderwell, 2003; Zucker & Kozma, 2003). Discussion Board, VoiceThread, and Kaltura Media are examples of asynchronous tools. Discussion Board (DB) creates an asynchronous environment that can "facilitate interactions" (Wu & Lee, 2004, p. 512) among students, and between students and the instructor. Nemirovsky and Galvis (2004) find that more meaningful discourses arise asynchronously when the instructor requests that students analyze, compare, and reflect upon concrete situations at the DB. Online instructors play an important role in eliciting the contributions of less active students, managing those who may dominate discussions, and creating a social environment at DB by requiring the number of the postings (Song & Simons, 2014; Anderson et al., 2001; Nunn, 2002). Furthermore, well-composed DB items can help students synthesize course materials and progress beyond the initial stage of exploration (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). VoiceThread (VT) is another asynchronous tool that allows students to upload a variety of media sources at the center of the communication. Jackson and Helms (2008) indicate that VT allows students to learn from each other's comments and threaded conversations in either a verbal or video response, which is not an option in face-to-face classes. Practicum students can be peer coaches when they provide oral and video feedback at the technology-mediated communal spaces such as VoiceThread. Figure 1 illustrates two PPT slides uploaded at VT: The first slide shows that the presenter (the icon on the top of the left side) shares the translated instructional materials (children's literature) in Russian and Spanish for the novice ELs, and the second slide shows the presenter (top icon) explaining the EL's work samples and a peer-reviewer's (bottom icon) critique of the presenter's explanation of the EL's work sample (e.g., Venn Diagram) and instructional resources (e.g., children's literature and a dual language word bank).

Besides DB and VT, Kaltura Media is another asynchronous cloud-based video management system that can help the students upload their teaching videos (Kaltura, n.d.). Kaltura Media is an important tool for students to share their teaching videos, however it does not allow users to communicate with each other like VoiceThread. Kaltura Media needs to have VoiceThread to enhance the mutual communication between the instructor and the student (presenter) and among the peers.

Synchronous environments that can be streamed in audio/video format are less flexible than asynchronous environments. However, synchronous environments provide more direct communication

Figure 1. VoiceThread slides with multiple instructional materials and collaborative reviews
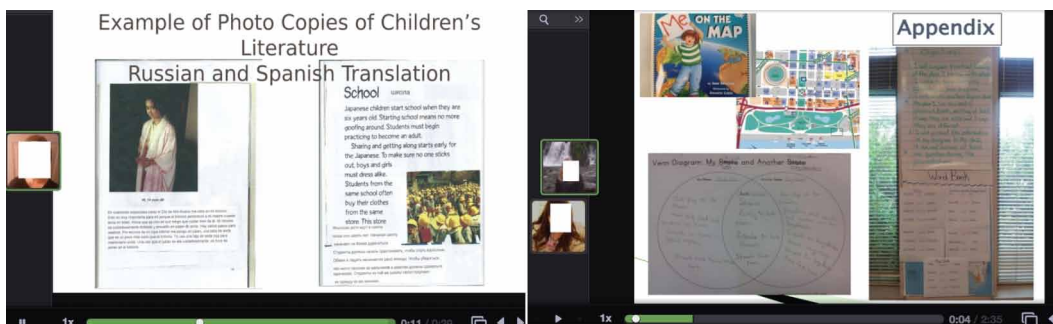
among the involved members. Synchronous environments render immediate feedback and allow multi-modality communication via listening, viewing, reading and writing, and require less time and effort to maintain social interaction (Moallem, 2006). In a synchronous virtual community, an instructor can act as a facilitator and provide support, feedback, and guidance during live interaction (Wisenberg & Stacey, 2005) by increasing the quality rather than the quantity of the interactions (Bernard et al., 2009; Schullo, 2005). The Horizon Wimba Classroom was used in this study for creating a web-based synchronous virtual environment with audio, video, application sharing, and content display. Entire class sessions can be archived for future viewing at Wimba. Wimba Classroom is virtual software, and microphones and webcams help make the Wimba experience more dynamic by allowing audio and video communication (Wimba, 2009).

In summary, guided online coaching is a virtual supervision model using asynchronous and synchronous environments. In guided online coaching, all of the class members initiate the discussions and provide feedback to the other members' responses, lesson plans, and teaching videos at asynchronous spaces such as Kaltura, VT and DB, and share concerns, questions and success stories at synchronous communal space such as Wimba.

Linguistically Responsive EL-Teaching

The goal of the TESOL practicum course is to prepare 'linguistically responsive' teachers to serve ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (Gay, 2010) has been the core for educating culturally diverse learners. However, CRT pedagogy shadows or downplays the role of language, and it fails to acknowledge how language is intertwined with culture in ELs' learning (Kim, Song & Coppersmith, 2018; Liggett, 2014; Nieto, 2002). Because "language cannot be separated from what is taught and learned in school" (Lucas et al., 2008, p. 362), this study highlights the six linguistically responsive teaching competencies that EL teachers need to develop. These six competences (Lucas et al., 2008) emphasize that EL teachers should be able to:

- Distinguish between conversational and academic English (Cummins, 2008);
- Prepare comprehensible [challenging but teachable] input (Krashen, 2003);
- Understand the importance of social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978);
- Create an inclusive classroom climate with minimal anxiety (Pappamihiel, 2002);
- Understand the impact of ELs' native language proficiency on their academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002);
- Recognize the importance of linguistic form and function (Halliday, 1978).

The Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) also provides the content for linguistically responsive teaching in this online practicum course (Song, 2016; Echevarria, Shorts, & Vogt, 2004). The eight SIOP components are connected to teaching to content and language objectives, teaching and reviewing the key concepts and vocabulary words using ELs' first languages, grouping configuration for differentiated instruction, and assessing the desired results (Echevarria et al., 2004). Effective EL teachers collaboratively discuss linguistically responsive teaching practices through active interaction after "seeing" various classroom activities through teaching videos during the online practicum course. Linguistically responsive teachers also support and evaluate the entire teaching process across lesson planning, actual classroom teaching, and post-teaching reflection (Hatch & Grossman, 2008) through continued participation in cyclic guided online coaching process in technology-mediated communal spaces such as Discussion Board, VoiceThread, and Kaltura Media. Figure 2 illustrates the three guided online coaching cycles, technology-mediated environments, and linguistically responsive content teaching activities.

Figure 2. Three guided coaching cycles with technology-mediated environments, and linguistically responsive teaching showcases

MAIN FOCUS OF THE ARTICLE

The context of this teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) program is described first, followed by the research methods that are the main focus of this study.

Context of TESOL Practicum Within TESOL Program

The graduate-level TESOL program at a Mid-western university has six TESOL courses that are part of the master's degree and state certification requirements. The six TESOL courses are; 1) applied linguistics in TESOL, 2) principles of second language acquisition, 3) cross-cultural communication/ sociolinguistics in the classrooms, 4) assessment in TESOL, 5) methods and instructional material development in TESOL, and 6) TESOL practicum. The first five courses are prerequisites for the TESOL practicum course.

The purpose of the TESOL practicum is to allow the students an opportunity to commit themselves to applying what they have learned in the five TESOL courses when teaching English learners (ELs) in the actual classrooms (Tomas, Farrelly, & Haslam, 2008). Stoynoff (1999) recommends that students in the TESOL practicum course need to incorporate theories into the act of teaching and lay the foundation for continued personal growth and professional development. Thus, TESOL practicum courses, regardless of physical or online delivery, need to include teaching and nonteaching experiences as Stanine's (1999) recommends. Nonteaching activities include; reading and reflecting on effective observation and teaching, learning about supervision tools (e.g., guided online coaching), observing other teachers, and exploring ELs' academic and cross-cultural backgrounds (Song & Simons, 2014; Stoynoff, 1999). Teaching activities used in the TESOL practicum include; preparing and delivering content lessons to serve ELs, reflecting on their own teaching with assessment data, and providing interactive and collaborative feedback. Based on these nonteaching and teaching activities, an online TESOL practicum course is developed and implemented with cyclic online coaching in technology-mediated communal spaces.

Main Focus of Study: Research Design

Participants

Seven graduate students took an online TESOL practicum course in the Spring of 2014. This was an exit course required of the TESOL program of study at a Midwestern university. Among the 7 participants, were six females and one male; 1 Hispanic, 2 Chinese, and 4 Caucasians. Each of the seven

students agreed to participate in this study. The study used these seven students' frequency data, i.e., number of postings at Discussion Board and/or VoiceThread. Six of the seven students had K-12 state teaching certification (2 elementary and 4 secondary), and they all had ELs in their content classes. One student was placed in an adult English as a second language class for this practicum experience.

The seven students were scheduled separately for exit interviews at Wimba Classroom. Each was scheduled on different days and at different time for twenty minute periods. The interviews were archived at the Wimba Classroom. Three archived interviews were not recorded properly because of a Wimba technology conflict. Thus, interview data from four of the seven students, three females and one male, were used as the qualitative data for this study. Among the four participants whose interviews were successful, three taught English learners in an urban new comer school, where they prepared the ELs to be mainstreamed; two were in elementary classrooms and the third, in a high school history class. The fourth participant taught history in a rural area high school with two exchange ELs; one from Germany and one from Thailand.

Creswell (2012) referred to three criteria when choosing the appropriate methodology for the study: (1) consider research questions, (2) know the audience, and (3) relate research to personal experience and training. In selecting the most effective methodology, this study deliberated the two research questions, interactions among the students and with the instructor/coach, and participants' personal and professional growth through the exit interviews. A qualitative research study drew on triangulation of data sources such as participants' perception of how they were transformed from the first VT to the fourth VT, perception of how each of the three cycles of online coaching influenced their teaching strategies for ELs, and on evaluation of the three coaching cycles. In addition, the frequency of participation on the DB and the VT was used in this study as interaction data.

Data Source

The primary data source for this study was derived from 1) frequency of asynchronous postings at the Discussion Board and VoiceThread by students and an instructor throughout the semester, and 2) synchronous exit interviews at Wimba Classroom for twenty minutes. The archived interview data at Wimba was transcribed for this study. Data analysis included a grounded theory approach, in the form of open and axial coding of all the data, and constant comparison across the data (Charmaz, 2006). The interview data examined the participants' perception of the three online coaching cycles and its impact on their EL-teaching practices.

Data Analysis and Findings

This research employed a mixed methods approach. Frequency quantitative data reported the interaction the students and the instructor had on the weekly DB threads and the VTs. The qualitative data from transcribed exit interviews measured the impact of the online practicum on teaching practices for ELs. There were two research questions (RQs) in this study:

RQ1: What interactions occurred among online TESOL practicum course participants?
RQ2: What was the impact of the online TESOL practicum course on participants' EL teaching?

Data Analysis and Findings for Research Question (RQ) 1

The frequency of interaction in the DB and VT was calculated to measure participants' interaction in this online practicum course (RQ1). The DB and VT interactions happened asynchronously each week by posting the original responses to the weekly reflective questions, and by providing comments to the original postings of their peers. First, the participants' posting frequency to the DB was counted for twelve weeks. The participants were not required to respond in the first, fourteenth, and the fifteenth week. The first week's assignment was to post the VT and the uploaded video to show their skills, and the fifteenth week was for posting the course reviews. Exit interviews were scheduled in Week

14. As a result, a true interaction happened for 12 weeks, from week 2 to week 13 at DB. Table 1 illustrates the frequency and weekly activities for 12 weeks.

The total DB posting frequency for all participants during the 12 weeks was 332. The mean score for each week was 27.7 and each participant, including the instructor, posted 3.46 times a week (Table 1). Student postings for the 12-weeks were 221. Students' mean frequency each week was 18.42 and 2.64 for each individual student. The instructor's total postings were 101; weekly mean frequency was 8.42 and 1.20 for each student. This indicated that the students (f = 2.64) participated more than the instructor did (f = 1.20). As Kamhi-Stein (2000) showed in her study, the instructor played "a reduced role" (p. 439) in the DB interaction, which may have been intended in the design of the practicum course for this study. This way, the students had to interact with other students. When looking at the frequency of participation at DB, the weeks for preparing, posting and reflecting on their teaching cases showed greater frequencies (f = 30.75) than the total mean (f = 27.7), e.g., 4 VTs with uploaded teaching videos in weeks 6 (f = 34), 8 (f= 30), 10 (f = 25) and week 13 (f= 34). The mean frequency was greater in weeks 6 and 13 (f = 34) when the actual synchronous post-conference

Table 1. Weekly activities, assignments, and participation frequency in discussion board

Weekly Activities	Assignments	Interaction Std. Inst.		Total
W2: Read Wardy's Observation Task I	DB reflection 1	15	8	23
W3: Read Wajnryb's Observation Task II	DB Reflection 2	16	10	26
W4: Read Echevarria et al.'s SIOP Comp. 1 & 8, Song's Backward Assessment	DB Reflection 3	20	8	28
W5: SIOP Comp. 2, Uribe's Chapter 1 on Background Knowledge	DB Reflection 4 Preconference for VT1 at DB	18	8	26
W6: Create VT1 on SIOP 1, 2, 8	VT1 link with Feedbacks, Kaltura Videos at DB DB Reflection 5 Postconference at Wimba for VT1	24	10	34
W7: Read Echevarria et al.'s Chapter SIOP Components 3, 4 & Write a Full Lesson Plan	DB Reflection 6 Preconference for VT2 at DB	16	8	24
W8: Create VT2 on SIOP 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 with Reading and Listening activities	VT2 link, DB Reflection 7 Postconference at DB	21	9	30
W9: Read about SIOP 5	DB Reflection 8 Preconference for VT3 at DB	15	7	22
W10: Create VT 3 on SIOP 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 with Speaking & Writing Activity	VT3 link, DB Reflection 9 Postconference at DB	17	8	25
W11: Read Cognitive Coaching & Habits of Mind	DB Reflection 10	18	8	26
W12: Write the Outline of Final Reflection Paper	DB Reflection 11 Preconference for VT4 at DB	16	8	24
*W13/14: Create VT4 on all of the SIOP Components on Four Language Domains	VT4 link, DB Reflection 12 Postconference for VT4 at Wimba	25	9	34
	Total	221	101	322
	Mean	18.4	8.4	26.8
	SD*	3.4	.9	4.0

Notes. Std. = student. Inst. = instructor. Week 13 and 14 combined. Interaction is amount of communication between std. and Inst. during the indicated week. SD stands for standard deviation.

was followed by VTs, compared to weeks 8 and 10 (f = 24.5) when the post-conference was done asynchronously at VT and DB (Table 1). This might indicate that the students were interested in posting more responses in this week since the synchronous meeting was the first time for them: they might have concerns and questions about this synchronous meeting.

For weeks 6, 8, 10 and 12, the participants had to upload and watch the teaching videos using Kaltura, and view VoiceThread lesson presentations posted to the DB. Group members needed to provide the audio and/or video feedback directly to the VTs after they viewed the lesson PPT presentations at the VTs and uploaded Kaltura teaching videos. Table 2 showed the frequencies of seven students and the instructor's participation and interactions at VTs. Total frequency at the 4 VTs was eighty-one; 47 postings by the students, and 34 postings by the instructor. One audio/video feedback to the VT was required for each VT posting; the mean frequency from the four VT postings for each student was 1.67 while the instructors was 1.2. The frequency data showed that the students were interacting among themselves more than with the instructor (Table 2). The frequency data analysis also reported that the students posted more than the minimum requirements (f = 1), which might indicate that they wanted to give more feedback regarding their peers' teaching.

Data Analysis and Findings of Research Question 2 (RQ2)

To support RQ2, which asked participants about the impact of the online practicum course on their EL teaching, the exit interview data was analyzed. First, the four one-on-one exit interviews were recorded and transcribed, and a researcher and a graduate research assistant (GRA) analyzed the transcribed data using hand-coding and ATLAS.ti, a software program used mostly in qualitative research data analysis. The following process was adopted by the two coders to code the interview transcriptions. Working separately, the two coders wrote the phrases that were significant for the study in the margins of the transcripts. The key words and phrases were highlighted. The researcher and GRA met to compare their coding and agree upon key words and phrases.

The researcher, then, ran ATLAS.ti, qualitative data analysis software to sort and analyze the interview transcriptions and created a coding book with common themes/families, key codes under each theme, excerpts of each code, and their frequencies. Three themes emerged; 1) acknowledgement of a guided coach, 2) impact of the three cycles of guided coaching, and 3) linguistically responsive teaching for ELs. Pseudonyms were used for the four participating teachers to secure their identities.

Table 2. Interactions of seven participants at VoiceThread

Interaction Among Student and Instructor								
Student	**VT 1** ***Std. **Inst.**		**VT 2** **Std. Inst.**		**VT 3** **Std. Inst.**		**VT 4** **Std. Inst.**	
Std. 1	1	2	1	1	3	2	2	1
Std. 2	3	2	4	1	4	2	1	1
Std. 3	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	1
Std. 4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Std. 5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Std. 6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Std. 7	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1
Mean	1.57	1.43	2.14	1.0	1.43	1.29	1.43	1.0
SD	.78	.53	1.67	0.00	1.25	.49	.79	.00

Acknowledgment of a Guided Coach

Acknowledging phrases of a guided coach were caught as probing and guiding under this theme. The sample phrases were; "what you are saying … would you give me an example … have I summarized what you have said. … what you are saying, let me summarize… "can you elaborate… what was going on in your noticing when delivering your strategies?" These acknowledging phrases about a coach supported what the trained online coach was supposed to do to become reflective and acknowledging, rather than evaluative and judgmental (Costa & Garmston, 2002). This theme might not include the discourses that supported RQ2 directly, but it showed the coach's credentials as nonjudgmental and acknowledging in support of the teachers' professional growth.

Impact of Three Cycles of Guided Online Coaching

Excerpts about effectiveness of online coaching as a supervision tool were tracked with the three coaching cycles, preconference, observation, and postconference.

Sam mentioned that this was the first time he thought about the success indicators during the preconference stage. Sam mention that he used to worry about the areas of concern. Sam said about his positive experience of intentional reflection of his strengths (success indicators) in the preconference cycle:

Sharing success indicators was new experience for me. It helped me think intentionally about the strengths of the lessons prepared, which was very reinforcing. I also found out quite a few strengths such as perseverance, eye-contacts, and frequent monitoring opportunities. (Sam, 2014 Interview)

About observing the teaching videos, the second cycle of online coaching, Julie mentioned:

Since my school did not adopt the SIOP, I would like to see how other school or classrooms were like. By viewing the peers' teaching videos, I was able to see the classroom walls, students' engagement, and coteaching classes. It was such eye-opening experience to listen and see a content teacher cotaught with an EL-specialist. It was also reinforcing to my own teaching that I was doing 'OK'. (2014 Interview)

Julie was experiencing different learning contexts using SIOP and coteaching, which her school did not adopt for the teachers with ELs. Julie was reflecting about benefits of the teaching videos, the second guided online coaching cycle.

Regarding the post-conference, four of four participants (100%) who participated in the interview mentioned that 15 to 20-minute conferences were too short to share information about their journey, and they all wanted to spend more time with the coach. Shelly said:

I feel more comfortable with you (coach/instructor) and want to talk more about the changes and how I took chances in adopting new hands-on activities and in borrowing strategies from the other participants. I was very reluctant to provide the critical feedback, but as the semester moved on, we all became peer-coaches, and realized that we were helping each other as thinking partners. (2014 Interview)

Shelly was sharing her professional growth as an EL-teacher, "I want to talk more about the changes…" and "I realized that we were helping each other." It seemed that the teachers were transformed to take risks to become more innovative and not afraid of critiquing the peers' teaching anymore because peer reviews/critiques were very helpful to each other.

Linguistically Responsive Teaching

RQ2 was asking about the impact of the online practicum course on linguistically responsive teaching. Three key categories emerged in this theme: 1) lesson preparation, 2) teaching strategies for ELs, and 3) reflection. In the sample narrative for impact of the preconference, Julie mentioned, "I have taught for about 20 years, and never knew about language objectives before this class." Shelly indicated the challenges of writing the language objectives in VoiceThread (VT)1, and mentioned, "it became better at VT3 and VT4." All of the participants mentioned that their content and language objectives were getting more explicit and measurable because of the instructor/coach's extensive feedback on them as well as their peers' feedback during the postconferences. Julie mentioned about her learning on evidence-based assessment for ELs:

I wrote content objectives when preparing lessons [for ELs] anyway, but this class does differently. Even though I do not like evidence-based teaching, I know now that teaching is about intentional evidence production, so I had to prepare language and content objectives [for ELs] with the aligned assessments before teaching the lesson [backward design], and this class was all about preparing evidence-based instruction. (Julie, 2014 Interview)

Julie was sharing her experience in the excerpt above about how she had to prepare when preparing her lesson for ELs because this class adopted the backward teaching and learning cycles to make sure that ELs needed to produce the outcomes that met the language and content objectives. Other key discourses for EL teaching strategies were SIOP, children's books in ELs' native languages, technology aided learning strategy, cultural strategies, guided reading strategies, and a total physical response (TPR). Another sample excerpt about transforming EL-teaching strategies was:

I had to give students many other choices of strategies … Some ELs had very weak education backgrounds and coping strategies not only due to their English proficiency, but also due to lack of their former academic competence… It was challenging to prepare language anchors based on each EL's needs, but now I have EL-specific tools from this course. (Katie, 2014 Interview)

The participating teachers also shared in the interview that they used more wait-time, and scoring rubrics with explicit criteria, and hands-on activities. Shelly said that she chose children's literatures that her ELs could relate to (e.g., *The day of Ahmed's secret* by Heide and Gilliland; *Grandma's gift* by Velasquez). Shelly mentioned, "Children's literature seems to help the ELs build background knowledge in a short period of time since they can relate to their prior experiences in their native countries." Reading strategies used by the participants were read aloud, choral reading, Kagan's (2004) cooperative strategies, picture walk, dual language sentence frames, Venn diagrams, and scaffolding. Katie mentioned:

After using read aloud, students read and understand the content of the book faster. … I ask them to show me three fingers … using the children's books in ELs' native languages like Spanish and Vietnamese to…" (2014 Interview)

Katie was a non-native English-speaking teacher, and she never did the read-aloud because of her accent in English. However, after discussing with the coach in VT1 about lack of confidence in her English proficiency, she decided to do 'read aloud', and she found out that the ELs were more engaged in the lesson and comprehended the content much faster. It happened, maybe, because of her confidence when facilitating the engagement of ELs in inquiry and discussion.

For inquiry, all of the participants shared that they used to teach the content directly to the students, but they learned to use inquiry-based instructional strategies such as essential questions and

cooperative learning. As a result, they found that the ELs were able to answer why and how questions, which they were not able to do before. Sam mentioned that in the VT1, use of inquiry had not been his habit, and he said, "now it is beginning to be mine."

Under reflection, the participants talked about transformation through reflection. The sample narrative was:

Self-assessing my own teaching practice has really helped me. Viewing my teaching videos made me reflect on what I need to change and how I could change the next lesson. …I became more aware of ELs' proficiency levels and more intentional. … I really considered myself a great teacher, but I realized that I have a lot to learn. (Sam, 2014 Interview)

Sam was a veteran teacher in the rural area high school, and he was sharing how watching his own teaching practices in teaching videos helped him become more linguistically responsive.

In summary, findings of RQ2 on the impact of the online practicum showed how the participating teachers perceived the intentionally designed online TESOL practicum course. They were overwhelmed and confused in the first two weeks because they were not used to technology-mediated production of teaching videos in Kaltura Media, lesson presentations in VoiceThread (VT), and reflections on DB and VT. However, as time moved on, the teachers became members of this digital communal community, started to engage, and were transformed. Among many factors, self-assessment and peer reviews as well as the coach's acknowledging and not-judgmental feedback were key factors that impacted their transformation.

Challenges and Solutions in Progress

Participants described their challenges in creating, presenting, and uploading VTs especially for the first two VT projects. Sam said at the exit interview, "It is now manageable due to the coaching cycles and to other students who posted their VTs and videos earlier. I am a whole lot better than at the beginning." Two participants, Shelly and Katie, said that they were reluctant to take this online practicum course because they lacked technological skills, but they discovered that this class contributed to transforming their teaching habits rather than focusing on technology. Sam and Julie expressed their need to meet the instructor and their peers in person but said they still learned a lot in the class. It seemed that the participating students actually interacted a lot online, but they still missed the onsite meetings.

CONCLUSION

While advancements in online learning have been examined widely, research on the effectiveness of a full online practicum course is scarce. The researcher conducted a search of the literature, which identified empirical and case studies of online teaching and learning as well as hybrid online TESOL courses connected to physical classes (Clark-Ibáñez & Scott, 2008; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Martin, Parker, & Oyarzun, 2013; Wu & Lee, 2004).

The online TESOL practicum course discussed in this article, was delivered in a Midwestern university in Spring of 2014. This exit course was designed to prepare the practicum students to become linguistically responsive using asynchronous tools without compromising the integrity of the course. As indicated in research by Petrides (2002) and Vonderwell (2003), the asynchronous elements of an online practicum provided additional time to give more thought to writings and discussions. As the class advanced, numerous methods of communication were used such as VoiceThread, Kaltura Media, and Wimba along with Discussion Board. These tools allowed for rich conversation, collaboration, and extensive writing. For the virtual supervision, cyclic guided online coaching was developed

and adopted as a supervising tool based on Gebhard's (1984) supervision models and Costa and Garmston's (2002, 2010) cognitive coaching model with technology mediation. The guided online coaching cycles provided a structure for the participants to receive feedback from the instructor as well as from their peers in a timely manner. The Wimba portion of the TESOL online practicum course allowed participants immediate feedback, social collaboration and rich communication as supported by Moallem's (2006) research. Both asynchronous and synchronous environments provided rich communication virtual spaces for successful online practicum course delivery.

The analyzed results based upon the research questions confirmed the positive impacts, to a certain extent, of this online practicum course. First, participants' interactions increased moderately among themselves and the instructor. The mean frequency among online participants between their peers and the instructor remained steady throughout the course and provided consistency. The mean frequency of participation on DB showed that the participants posted more responses to the DB than the instructor, which was supported by Kamhi-Stein's research in 2000. Mean DB postings for students during the online course averaged four postings and three postings for the instructor (Table 1). There was, however, significant increase with student postings from week 2 to week 14 of the course: The mean total DB posting for all students during week 2 of the online course averaged 15 and by week 14 that number increase by 67% with total postings of 25 (Table 1). The instructor's responses were consistent throughout the course and showed no significant increase.

Interpretations of these results should include the mandatory posting requirement (e.g., minimum of one response to the peers' postings). However, the participating students increased their responses beyond the requirement. The required number of feedback responses was one for each of the four VTs. The analyzed frequency of VT1 through VT4 showed that some students provided more than the one required feedback response to the VTs (Table 2). The participants of this online practicum were explicit when they reflected on the impact of the online practicum, e.g., wrote language objectives aligned with evidence-based assessments, shared success indicators in pre-conferences, inquiry-based discussions, and used children's literature that was related to ELs' backgrounds. This linguistically responsive discourses may have occurred because of well-implemented guided coaching that encouraged rich collaboration and outcome-based backward instructional design and assessments.

The advantages of increased communication among participating students may be the result of the cyclic online coaching along with a technology-mediated communication environment using VT and DB. Julie's statement on post-conference and self-reflection also ensured the significance of the online practicum course; "The instructor's and class mates' feedback at the post-conference and posting self-assessment of my own teaching helped me think about where to take my teaching for the next lesson." Julie's reflection showed that the design of the practicum course, especially coaching cycles, helped her plan, deliver, and reflect on her teaching throughout the semester. Replication of this online course would be needed to support similar findings regarding efficacy of online practicum courses using the data from VoiceThread and Kaltura teaching videos more explicitly. It is true, however, that online supervision using guided online coaching systematically allowed students to provide more feedback through more frequent interaction, whereas the physical supervision did not.

Challenges of technology, as described by Wisenberg and Stacey (2005), did not affect this online practicum course. Students were able to access and utilize the technology with very little interruption to instruction or the learning process. Because this was the exit course of six online TESOL courses, the assumption might be that participants already had knowledge and skill in using VoiceThread and other technology-aided tools. In addition, overview sessions were given in the first week of the semester; one physical session and one virtual one, which included tutoring on how to upload the media to VoiceThread and videos using Kaltura. Uploading the teaching videos was a new experience for the students. Katie said in her interview that she was overwhelmed by having to use Kaltura to upload the teaching videos for the VT1 assignment. Katie said in the interview:

Even though I am still conscious of and worried about uploading the teaching videos at Kaltura Media and VoiceThread presentations, I now know that it is not because of my technology skills, but because of the Internet connection and/or the size of the video files.

What Katie was saying was that she might end up not thinking about the technology, but thinking about lesson preparation and delivery when making VT projects. When tracking the transcriptions of the exit interviews, ATLAS.ti did not find any excerpts under technology difficulty. When challenges were discussed in their exit interviews, the participants did not really mention missing face-to-face courses. This might be due to their familiarity with the course framework, expectations from the beginning of the semester, and/or use of the same formats they had used in the previous five TESOL online courses. The practicum course might also have been successful because of the small class size.

The researcher also looked at instructor-initiated feedback, peer-initiated feedback, and self-evaluation. The instructor used guided instruction and student praise almost equally during the guided coaching sessions, 29% and 28% respectfully. "Your confidence level is improving. I am so proud of you." were comments given to the students that helped them maintain confidence and develop a strong rapport with the coach. The coach/instructor provided adequate feedback with nonjudgmental rephrasing for 20% of the total discussion, with responses such as "Okay. Let me summarize." This constant feedback and praise, when appropriate, might have encouraged the students and assisted them with guided directions in a non-threating environment (Kim, Song & Coppersmith, 2018; Costa & Garmston, 2010). Participants appeared to be successful at achieving the online practicum course objectives under the instructor's intentional guidance and virtual peers' constructive critiques. One participant said, "This online practicum course structure should be used in a traditional practicum course."

For this study, researchers used mostly a qualitative data analysis along with descriptive frequency data analysis to examine the outcomes and determine if this online practicum course was successful. Findings suggested that student interaction with peers was critical for the success of the online practicum course. These claims were supported by Picciano (2002), who pointed out the need for strong online communication in order to be successful in achieving the course objectives. The result of the study confirmed that most of the online course students perceived their transformation more successfully when they had opportunities to dialogue with their peers, and with the instructor online.

There are several weaknesses of this study that should be noted by those considering replication. The study should have included data throughout the semester, so it would have demonstrated their evolvement and transformation more vividly than data from the exit interviews only. Replicators should check the online technology support at their university to avoid conflicts, e.g., Wimba Classroom. In Spring 2015, the University where this study was conducted dropped Wimba and adopted Blackboard Collaborate as synchronous communication software. In addition, with exclusive online quizzes and built-in assessment scoring rubrics, replicators may find that evidence of student learning would be more data-based. Even with the weaknesses cited, this study succeeded in providing virtual supervision using asynchronous and synchronous coaching cycles (Figure 2). This study can help other researchers generate more significant data as it regards learning engagement in online practicum courses as compared to learning engagement in face-to-face courses.

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